

Von Willebrand Disease at a Glance

Von Willebrand disease (VWD) is the most common inherited bleeding disorder in the United States and the most common bleeding disorder affecting women. It affects your blood’s ability to clot.

With VWD, either you have low levels of a certain protein in your blood or the protein doesn’t work the way it should. The protein is called von Willebrand factor, which also carries with it clotting factor VIII, another important protein that helps your blood clot.



CAUSES

VWD is almost always inherited. Your parents pass the gene for the disease on to you.



SIGN AND SYMPTOMS

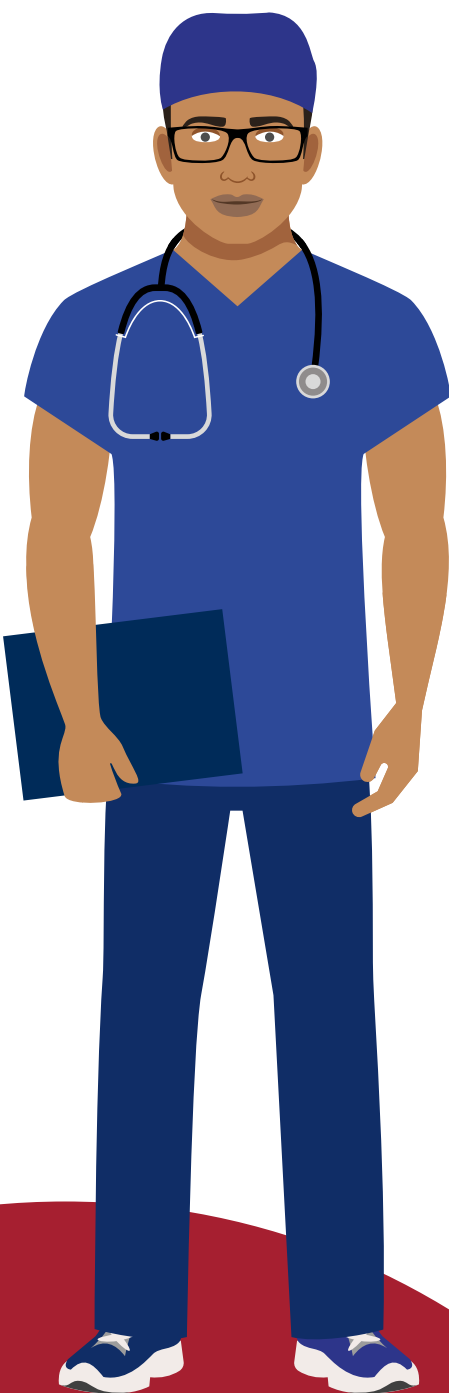
The signs and symptoms of VWD depend on the type and severity of the disease. The most common sign of the condition is heavy bleeding.



DIAGNOSIS

Early diagnosis is important to make sure you are treated effectively and can live a normal, active life.

To find out if you have VWD, your healthcare provider will:



Take a complete personal and family medical history.



Do a physical exam to look for unusual bruising or other signs of recent bleeding and evidence of liver disease or anemia.



Order blood tests to check how quickly your blood clots and the levels of clotting factors in your blood.

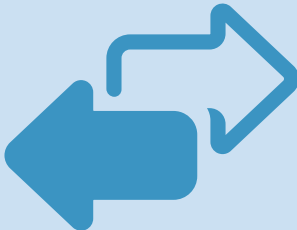


Refer you to a hematologist to confirm the diagnosis.

TREATMENT AND TIPS FOR LIVING WITH VWD

What treatment you need depends on the type and severity of the disease.

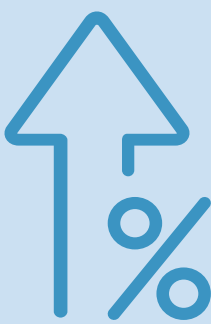
Treatments include medicines to:



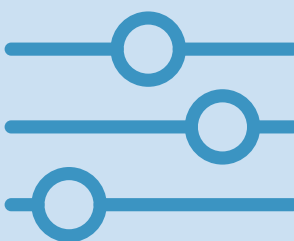
Replace von Willebrand factor.



Prevent breakdown of clots.



Increase release of von Willebrand factor and factor VIII into the bloodstream.



Control heavy menstrual bleeding.

Tips for living with VWD:



Follow your treatment plan.



Receive routine follow-up care.



Maintain a healthy lifestyle.



Learn how to lower your risk of complications.